

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

One of the most critical issues our country faces today is shaping our foreign policy in the developing world. As moderate democrats, the New Democrat Coalition (NDC) is committed to working with both Democratic and Republican leaders to develop a common foreign policy agenda that will provide constructive U.S. leadership throughout the world and move our country in the right direction.

Specifically, one area that we believe should be a special foreign policy priority for our country is the promotion of free, quality basic education, particularly for girls. Currently, 104 million children in the world still do not have access to primary education, of those 104 million children, 60 million are girls. Qualified studies have shown educating girls increases their income, promotes smaller, healthier families, and reduces infant mortality by 5-10 percent. Furthermore, girls that are educated are less likely to contract the HIV virus. A study in Zambia found that AIDS spread twice as fast among uneducated girls. As you can see, a host of evidence supports increasing aid for education in the developing world.

Five years ago in Dakar, Senegal, over 180 countries pledged to guarantee all children around the world the opportunity to complete a quality basic education by 2015. We can only hope to do our part and meet this global goal if there is strong support and leadership by the Administration. As Prime Minister Blair has sought to focus the upcoming G-8 summit on Africa, we strongly encourage you to work with G-8 heads of state to put forward a major proposal on universal education with an initial pledge to give every African girl a free and quality education. This type of initiative would send a robust signal about the strength of the American spirit and our commitment to winning hearts and minds around the world.

As a first step, a global commitment by the G-8 of \$3 billion could help to fund education in an additional 25 African countries, with the U.S. share being about \$1 billion. This would serve as the impetus for an eventual commitment of \$7-10 billion dollars, with the U.S. share being \$2.5 billion, to guarantee every child in the world a quality basic education. A pledge of this kind should be coordinated through the Fast Track Initiative, a framework created to develop uniform standards, ensure transparency, and coordinate external financing.


Given your stated interest in education and women's literacy, you surely understand that education is the foundation for fighting HIV/AIDS and promoting democracy and security. We believe there can be no significant progress on these priorities until there is a significant pledge by the world's leaders to fund and support universal basic education, especially for girls and young women.

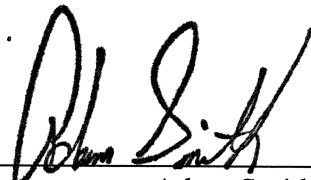
We look forward to working with you to make our common goals a reality.


Sincerely,

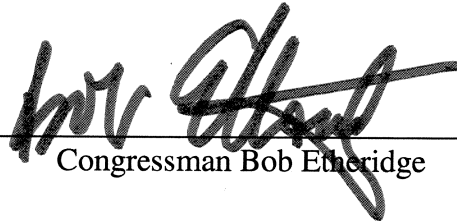

Congressman Ron Kind

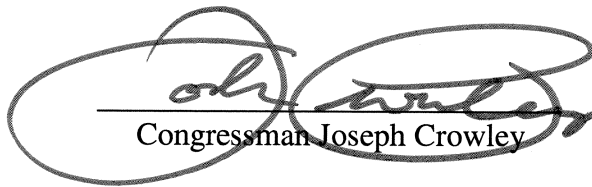

Congresswoman Ellen O. Tauscher

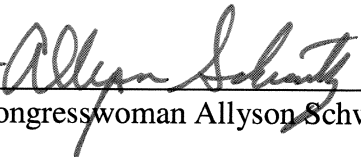

Congressman Artur Davis

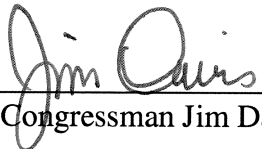

Congressman Adam Smith

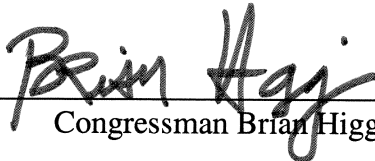

Congressman David Scott



Congressman Bob Etheridge



Congressman Joseph Crowley



Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz

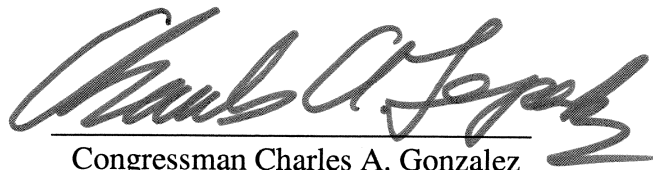

Congressman Jim Davis


Congressman Brian Higgins

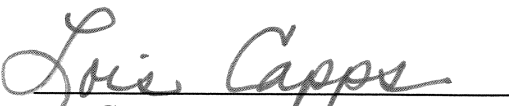

Congressman Vic Snyder


Congressman Eliot Engel

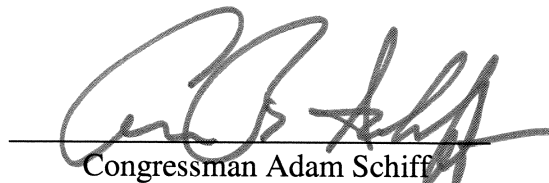

Congresswoman Jane Harman


Congressman Charles A. Gonzalez



Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy



Congresswoman Lois Capps

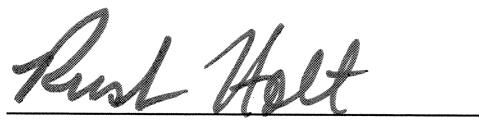

Congressman Rick Larsen


Congressman Adam Schiff


Congressman David Price


Congressman Rahm Emanuel


Congresswoman Susan Davis


Congressman Rush Holt


Congressman Brian Baird